



U.S. Department of Justice

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
July 6, 2009**

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PRESS RELEASE

ALLEGED UTAH DRUG DEALERS, DISTRIBUTION ORGANIZATIONS TARGETED IN THREE SIGNIFICANT FEDERAL INDICTMENTS; CHARGES ALLEGE DISTRIBUTION OF COCAINE, HEROIN, METH, FIREARMS CHARGES

SALT LAKE CITY – Fourteen individuals are charged in three federal indictments -- two returned Wednesday and one returned in June -- with violations of federal drug laws in connection with the alleged distribution of cocaine, heroin, and methamphetamine in Utah. The indictments follow a significant 16-month investigation into drug trafficking organizations conducted by the FBI, Sandy City Police Department, the Utah County Major Crimes Task Force and the U.S. Attorney's Office.

“Working with its state and local partners from the Utah County Major Crimes Task Force, which includes a number of municipal police agencies from the county, as well as the Sandy City Police Department, the FBI was able to utilize its investigative personnel, its technical resources, and its extensive language capabilities to address this significant drug trafficking organization, which was operating in several communities along the Wasatch Front. This 16-month investigation uncovered a network of

individuals who utilized various commercial establishments to engage in their narcotics trafficking conspiracy. It is always the intent of the FBI to address these types of conspiracies from an organizational perspective and, rather than merely interdict the activities of individuals, the goal is to disrupt and dismantle the organization, which we believe has occurred in this case,” FBI Special Agent in Charge Timothy Fuhrman said today.

U.S. Attorney for Utah Brett L. Tolman said the complex investigation initially targeted mid-level dealers. “Law enforcement agencies then worked their way up through distribution lines to higher drug distributors and associates. Frequent users also were charged as a result of this investigation, including some being prosecuted in state court. Officers and prosecutors targeted the bottom, middle and top tiers of a significant drug distribution network,” Tolman said.

“Almost daily our detectives hear from worried family and friends of loved ones going to Salt Lake County to get their daily dose of heroin and cocaine. Often times they bring back enough to distribute to other users in Utah County to support their habit. Recently we have noticed an increase in the willingness of the dealers in Salt Lake County, such as the ones arrested in this investigation, to come to Utah County to distribute heroin and cocaine,” Lieutenant Rich Ferguson of the Utah Major Crimes Task Force said today.

“The overdose rate from using these drugs or a combination of drugs is steady and predictable. The impact of disrupting this drug trafficking organization operating along the Wasatch Front will hopefully save some of the lives of users who purchased their drugs daily from these suspects. Unfortunately, we still have a significant problem along the Wasatch Front with similar drug trafficking organizations. They have no concern for who they distribute to or what lives they destroy. The detectives and staff of the Utah County Major Crimes Task Force are committed to working along with Federal and local law enforcement to identify and disrupt these drug trafficking organizations,” Ferguson said.

Sandy City Police Chief Steve Chapman believes the results of the joint operation will have a significant impact on Sandy and its citizens. “We have been able to identify several major drug distributors, on all levels, who are either dealing heroin, cocaine and methamphetamine within Sandy City or are supplying drugs to dealers in our city, and we have taken them off the

streets. In addition to making arrests of major drug dealers, we have also made arrests of those who continue to support those dealers by purchasing and using these harmful and illegal substances,” Chapman said today.

Indictment 1:

US v. Reshard Benard, Gessiel Sanchez aka “Tito,” and Jose Soto-Tula

Reshard Benard, age 31, and Gessiel Sanchez aka “Tito,” age 25, both of Salt Lake City, and Jose Soto-Tula, age 25, of West Valley City are charged 20-count indictment with distribution of cocaine and possession of cocaine with intent to distribute; distribution of methamphetamine; conspiracy to manufacture cocaine base; manufacturing cocaine base; and possession of a firearm by a restricted person. Soto-Tula is a Mexican national. Law enforcement authorities believe Sanchez has either Mexican or Guatemalan citizenship.

Benard and Sanchez are in custody. A warrant has been issued for Soto-Tula’s arrest but he is not in custody.

Count five of the indictment, for example, charges Benard, Sanchez, and Soto-Tula with conspiring to manufacture 50 grams or more of cocaine base. Several counts of the indictment allege distribution of cocaine and possession of cocaine with intent to distribute.

The potential maximum penalty for conspiracy to manufacture cocaine is up to life in prison with a 10-year mandatory minimum. Distribution of cocaine carries a potential 29 year sentence while distribution of meth is a maximum of 40 years in federal prison with a five-year mandatory minimum sentence. The firearms counts carry potential 10-year sentences.

Indictment 2:

U.S. v Salvador Abraham Jaimes aka “Chava,” Jose Martinez-Romero aka “Chaparro,” Sandra Palacios-Diaz, Omar Galaviz and Fidel Solache-Moreno

Salvador Abraham Jaimes aka “Chava,” age 28; Jose Martinez-Romero aka “Chaparro,” age 33; Sandra Palacios-Diaz, age 26; Omar Galaviz, age 27; and Fidel Solache-Moreno, age 23, of Salt Lake City, all Mexican nationals, are charged with conspiracy to distribute cocaine and distribution of cocaine and possession of cocaine with intent to distribute in an eight-count indictment.

Federal arrest warrants are outstanding for Galaviz and Solache-Moreno. The others have been arrested on the charges in the indictment.

The first count of the indictment charges Jaimes, Martinez-Romero and Palacios-Diaz with conspiracy to distribute 500 grams or more of cocaine. Count two of this indictment charges Galaviz and Solache-Moreno with conspiring to distribute 5 kilograms or more of cocaine.

The conspiracy count against Jaimes, Martinez-Romero and Palacios-Diaz carries a potential prison sentence of 40 years with a five-year mandatory minimum. The conspiracy count against Galaviz and Solache-Moreno carries a potential sentence of life in prison with a 10-year mandatory minimum. Distribution of cocaine and possession of cocaine with intent to distribute carry maximum 20-year sentences.

Indictment 3:

U.S. v Martin Mayorga aka Hector Estrada aka Leopoldo Racheco aka “Chino,” Liverio Mancinas-Lara aka Benito Morales-Cruz aka Jorge Luis Paz aka “Jorge” aka “Nalgon,” Francisco Alvarez-Salas aka “Paco” aka “Chiquilin,” Carlos Leon-Cervantes aka “Cunado,” Jose Guadalupe Leon-Camargo aka “Lupillo” and FNU LNU aka “Lupe

Martin Mayorga, age 37, and Jose Guadalupe Leon-Camargo, age 24, both of West Valley City; Liverio Mancinas-Lara, age 26, and Francisco Alvarez-Salas, age 19, both of Magna; Carlos Leon-Cervantes, age 29, of Provo; and FNU LNU (first name unknown; last name unknown) aka Lupe of West Valley City, all Mexican nationals, are charged in an eight-count indictment with conspiracy to distribute heroin and cocaine, possession of

heroin and cocaine with intent to distribute and unlawful use of a communication facility.

“Lupe” has not been arrested but the other defendants in this indictment are in custody.

Four of the defendants, Mayorga, Mancinas-Lara, Alvarez-Salas and “Lupe” are charged in count one of the indictment with conspiracy to distribute heroin and cocaine from March 25 through May 21, 2009. The indictment alleges they conspired to distribute 100 grams or more of heroin. The four are also charged in the second count of the indictment with conspiracy to sell cocaine between March 2 and May 21 of this year. Leon-Cervantes and Leon-Camargo are charged with using a telephone to facilitate the commission of a felony – conspiracy to distribute heroin and cocaine. The other counts of the indictment charge defendants with possession of heroin and cocaine with intent to distribute, including count five which charges Mayorga, Mancinas-Lara, Alvarez-Salas and “Lupe” with possessing 100 grams or more of heroin with intent to distribute it.

The potential maximum penalties for count one and count five are 40 years in prison with a five-year mandatory minimum. The telephone counts carry potential penalties of up to four years in prison. The distribution counts, with the exception of count five, have potential 20 year sentences per count.

The indictments include a notice of intent to seek the forfeiture of cash, vehicles, firearms and other items used directly or indirectly to commit or facilitate the crimes charged in the indictments.

Defendants charged in indictments are presumed innocent unless or until proven guilty in court.

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